Annex to the letter dated 6 July 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my authorities, I have the honour to write to you to bring to your attention and that of the Security Council the position of the Frente POLISARIO regarding the new mechanism established by the African Union aiming at substantively contributing to the completion of the decolonization process of our country, Western Sahara.

In its unanimous decision 653(XXIX) of 4 July 2017, the Assembly of the African Union requested the Chairpersons of the African Union and the African Union Commission, in consultation with the African Union Peace and Security Council, to take appropriate measures to support the United Nations efforts and encourage the parties, the Sahrawi Republic (SADR) and Morocco, both of whom are now members of the African Union, to cooperate in good faith towards ensuring the success of the new process.

It is to be recalled also that the African Union Assembly, in its decision 677(XXX) of 29 January 2018, expressed its support for the relaunching of the negotiation process between the Sahrawi Republic and Morocco with a view to reaching a durable solution consistent with the letter and spirit of the relevant Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union decisions and United Nations resolutions. The Assembly further requested Morocco to allow the African Union Observer Mission to return to Western Sahara as well as to allow an independent monitoring of human rights in the Territory.

In pursuance of the mandate entrusted to him by the aforementioned decisions, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, presented a report on the question of Western Sahara to the 31st Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Nouakchott, the sisterly Islamic Republic of Mauritania, on 1 and 2 July 2018, in which our President, Brahim Ghali, took part.

In his report, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission provided an account of his recent visit to the region, where he held meetings with the two parties, the Sahrawi and Moroccan respective authorities, and the neighbouring countries, as well as his interaction with the United Nations at various levels, including the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara. He also presented his recommendations regarding the way forward to resolve the conflict in Western Sahara.

Acting on the recommendations of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the 31st Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government took a decision in which it stressed the need for renewed efforts to overcome the current impasse in the negotiation process and to find "a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in line with relevant AU decisions and UN Security Council resolutions".

To this end, it decided to establish an African Union mechanism comprising the African Union Troika and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to extend effective support to the United Nations-led efforts. In this regard, the African Union also requested the Commission to initiate the required consultation for the reactivation of the African Union Office to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in Western Sahara in order to facilitate operational coordination with the United Nations.

The Sahrawi authorities welcome the unanimous historic decision of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government to establish a special African mechanism dedicated to the question of Western Sahara. The decision indeed reflects the deep concern of the African Union regarding the unjustified delay in the decolonization of Western Sahara, a full-fledged State of the Union. It also represents a proactive initiative aimed at operationalizing the African Union commitment to contribute substantively to the search for a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict between the Sahrawi Republic and the Kingdom of Morocco in line with the African Union Constitutive Act, as well as relevant OAU/African Union and United Nations resolutions.

The decision is also a significant step given Morocco's persistent defiance of African Union decisions and its incessant attempts to deliberately deny the African Union's indispensable role vis-à-vis the peace process in Africa's last colony, manifested, among other things, in Morocco's reluctance to allow the African Union Observer Mission to return to the Territory and resume its collaboration with MINURSO.

It is to be recalled that, as the successor to OAU, the African Union has remained strongly committed to the decolonization of Western Sahara, ever since OAU became actively engaged in reactivating the peace process in Western Sahara following the adoption of its resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX) of 1983. OAU resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX), which was endorsed by the General Assembly in 1984 and 1985, was instrumental in laying the foundations for all subsequent United Nations efforts aimed at finding a solution to the conflict.

The African Union is therefore acting regarding Western Sahara not only within the framework of its responsibilities for the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the African Union Constitutive Act, which establishes as a fundamental principle of the Union the "peaceful resolution of conflicts among Member States of the Union through such appropriate means as may be decided upon by the Assembly" (art. 4 (e)). The African Union also remains a full partner of the United Nations and guarantor of the implementation of the United Nations-OAU Settlement Plan of 1991, which was accepted by the two parties, the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco, and endorsed by the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly.

Furthermore, in discharging its responsibility for peace and security in Africa, the African Union cooperates very closely with the Security Council in all matters related to peace and security on the continent. It is in this context that the African Union has taken its decision to set an African mechanism dedicated to Western Sahara through which the African Union would make its indispensable and significant contribution to the peace process in Western Sahara.

The Sahrawi authorities therefore salute the strong commitment of the African Union to contributing substantively to the resolution of the conflict between the Sahrawi Republic and Morocco, and to ensuring compliance of its members with their obligations, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all its member States, including SADR.

The Sahrawi authorities also reiterate their preparedness to engage in direct negotiations with Morocco, without preconditions and in good faith, as called for by Security Council resolutions and African Union decisions. In this regard, they reaffirm their strong commitment to cooperating fully with the efforts deployed by both the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler, and by the relevant African Union policy organs, including in particular the newly established mechanism, with a view to bringing about a speedy end to the decolonization process of Western Sahara.

I would be most grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sidi M. **Omar**
Representative of the Frente POLISARIO
at the United Nations